



## City of Madison News Release

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**For More Information Contact:**

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**Informational Website Link:**

[www.lowradon.org](http://www.lowradon.org), [www.cdc.gov/nceh/radiation/brochure/profile\\_radon.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/radiation/brochure/profile_radon.htm)

**It's Time to Catch an Invisible Home Invader - Radon**

*A Simple Test will Detect its Presence*

A well sealed and insulated home will protect you from winter's chills, but it can also be a collection point for a completely odorless and colorless gas that could damage your lungs and give you lung cancer. The gas in question is called radon, and since this is the season when we normally spend much more time indoors it is a particularly good time to learn more about it.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature provides us with the source of this problem. The soil in our area contains a small and unevenly distributed amount of uranium, the same mineral that is mined for fueling nuclear power plants. When uranium starts breaking down in soil, rock or water, one of the byproducts of this breakdown is radon gas. If your house happens to be built on soil that contains some uranium, this radioactive gas can seep through cracks, sump pumps and other openings in basement floors and walls and enter your home.

The EPA estimates that radon is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year in the U.S. About 2,900 of these deaths occur among people who have never smoked. If you do smoke and your home has elevated radon levels, your risk of lung cancer goes up even more. The bad news is that about 46% of the homes tested in Dane County in 2012 have levels of radon that are considered unsafe.

The good news is that there is a simple, inexpensive way to detect the presence of this invisible and harmful home invader. A low cost radon test kit (usually under \$25) can be purchased at any local hardware or home product store. Public Health also has kits available for sale at \$10.00 per kit. (See below for detailed information). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Surgeon General of the United States recommends that the test be done in the living area of your home where your family spends most of their time. The kits come with a pre-paid return envelope, and after the recommended amount of monitoring time, all you need to do is to send the kit to the laboratory for analysis. The lab will send you easy to read results within a week or two, or even earlier if you provide them with your email address.

If testing shows that you do have a radon problem, you will need to install a system that will prevent the radon from entering your home. Such systems should be installed by a certified mitigation contractor. According to Janice Block Banks, Public Health Radon Specialist, "While the cost of fixing this problem can seem high (typically \$800-\$1,200) it is a real bargain when weighed against removing the threat of lung cancer from your home".

This is why Public Health joins the EPA every January by using National Radon Action Month as an opportunity to remind the public that it pays to take action against this invisible and preventable threat to the health of your family.

For more information regarding radon, including a list of qualified radon remediation contractors, visit the Wisconsin Radon Information Web site at:

[www.lowradon.org](http://www.lowradon.org)

For more background on radon see the following link:

[http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/radiation/brochure/profile\\_radon.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/radiation/brochure/profile_radon.htm)

To purchase a test kit, please call the Public Health's Environmental Health Office radon line at (608) 243-0392. To talk to Public Health's radon specialist, call the South Central Radon Information Center at (608) 243-0392.

Now is an ideal time to test your home for radon and make sure that your family is protected against this invisible threat to their long term health.

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NEWS RELEASE

Public Health - Madison & Dane County

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